REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-7, 10-16 and 18-19 now stand in the present application, claims 1-4, 7, 10-13 and 16 having been amended, claims 9 and 17 having been canceled, and new claims 18 and 19 having been added. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In view of the above amendments to the claims, the specification has been amended at page 1 so as to make it clear that the claimed invention does now relate to a multi-agent system. Since this is the central thrust of the specification, it is believed that this amendment is in order.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. As noted above, Applicants have corrected the deficiency pointed out by the Examiner by suitable amendment of independent claim 1 and accordingly, the Examiner's § 101 rejection of these claims is believed to have been overcome.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1-7 and 9-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by the article authored by Marazakis et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's § 102 rejection of the claims.

As can be seen from the amendments above, Applicants' claims have been narrowed in scope so as to be directed to a system and method of performance of a multi-agent system comprising a plurality of collaborative agents. There is a fundamental difference between a multi-agent system and the more conventional type of distributed computing application described in Marazakis. That difference is that agents organise themselves to provide a service. How efficiently the resulting service is

provided depends on how the agents have organised themselves when faced with the problem of providing that service. That organisation includes the agents deciding who does what (in other words, what resource is allocated to what task – each resource being represented by an agent), and on what terms (these are the SLA's agreed between agents – sometimes referred to as a contract in present application). (See, for example, page 8, line 25 to page 9, line 13 of the present specification.) Thus analysing the performance of a multi-agent system involves analysing the interactions between resources, rather than just analysing the performance of resources in isolation - as is seen in Marazakis.

Since Marazakis is not directed to a multi-agent system and its performance the present claims as amended patentably distinguish over the cited reference. Accordingly, this ground of rejection is believed to have been mooted by the above amendments – thus making it unnecessary to discuss the specific points raised by the Examiner in any further detail.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 1-7, 10-16, 18 and 19, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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